ACTION PLAN TO ACCOMPANY THE RECOMMENDATION ON THE HISTORIC URBAN LANDSCAPE

Upon adoption of the new UNESCO Recommendation on the Conservation of Historic Urban Landscape at the 36th session of the General Conference in autumn 2011, the Member States commit themselves to taking appropriate steps:

- to adapt this new instrument to their specific contexts;
- to disseminate it widely across their national territories;
- to facilitate implementation through formulation and adoption of supporting policies; and
- to monitor its impact on the conservation and management of historic cities and urban settlements.

While stressing the need to take account of the singularity of the context of each historic city and urban settlement, which will result in a different approach to its management, nevertheless six critical steps can be identified for Member States to consider when implementing the historic urban landscape approach. They would include the following:

1. Undertake comprehensive surveys and mapping of the city’s natural, cultural and human resources (such as water catchment areas, green spaces, monuments and sites, view sheds, local communities with their living cultural traditions);

2. Reach consensus using participatory planning and stakeholder consultations on what values to protect and to transmit to future generations and to determine the attributes that carry these values;

3. Assess vulnerability of these attributes to socio-economic stresses, as well as impacts of climate change;

4. With these in hand, and only then, develop a city development strategy (CDS) or a city conservation strategy (CCS) to integrate urban heritage values and their vulnerability status into a wider framework of city development, the overlay of which will indicate (a) strictly no-go areas; (b) sensitive areas that require careful attention to planning, design and implementation; and (c) opportunities for development (among which high-rise constructions);

5. Prioritize actions for conservation and development;

6. Establish the appropriate partnerships and local management frameworks for each of the identified projects for conservation and development in the CDS/CCS, as well as to develop mechanisms for the coordination of the various activities between different actors, both public and private.
To assist the Member States in this exercise, UNESCO aims to establish a HUL Support Programme that will draw upon international and intersectoral expertise in the fostering of cooperation in the further development and implementation of the historic urban landscape approach, the exchange of ideas and practices, and communication and transmission of knowledge to all stakeholders and civil society.

In this vein, the HUL Support Programme would comprise the following seven actions:

1. Create a special website to facilitate communication and exchange on the historic urban landscape approach related to its development and implementation, in particular as a virtual platform for local governments and site managers to share views, ideas and knowledge.

2. Establish a working group comprised of institutional partners relevant to the development and implementation of the historic urban landscape approach, with a particular focus on those that can provide specialized skills and expertise to Member States requesting technical assistance.

3. Develop technical assistance packages which can be sponsored by bilateral donors and private sector parties, with an emphasis on lesser-developed regions, such as Africa, Central Asia and small island developing States, and with a selection of pilot sites that require particular attention, such as historic cities inscribed on the World Heritage List in Danger or other international watch lists.

4. Encourage scientific research on specific aspects of the historic urban landscape approach, including Integrated Heritage Legislation; Urban Heritage and Integrity; Compatibility of Contemporary Interventions; Limits of Acceptable Change; Strategic Assessment and Heritage Impact Assessment; Modern Planning and Design and Traditional Knowledge; Creativity and Making Heritage; Disaster Reduction and Adaptation; Private Sector Involvement; Documentation, Visualization and Presentation – to name but a few.

5. Organize conferences and symposia to foster international debate on the further development and implementation of the historic urban landscape approach and to disseminate the state-of-the-art in research and practice, and also to make them known through publications in the virtual and real domains.

6. Support the development of didactic materials, curriculum design and teacher training with regard to courses and modules on urban conservation and the historic urban landscape approach in synergy with ICCROM and the various category 2 centres established under the auspices of UNESCO around the world.

7. Organize a review exercise, once every six years, with regard to the implementation of the Recommendation by Member States and its impact on the conservation and management of urban settlements and historic cities, to be used to formulate best practice guidelines and specific advice to the stakeholders, and to report back to UNESCO’s General Conference.